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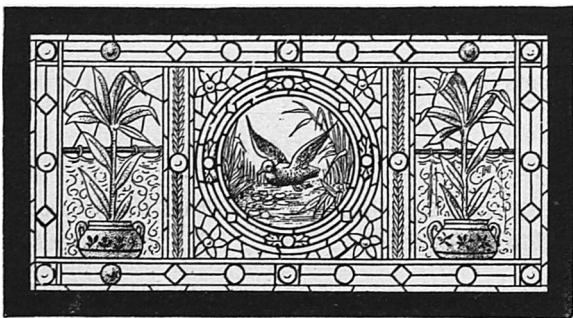
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STAINED GLASS PANEL DESIGN.

ODDS AND ENDS, WITH PEN AND PENCIL.

WITH their naturally refined taste and their fondness for all that pertains to the home, women should take an especial interest in decoration, and successful decorators might be found, or certainly trained, among them. One of the first in merit of domestic decorators was a woman, and a talented one—Angelica Kauffman, and I have remarked that, in almost all cases where women artists have given attention to decorative matters they have displayed high abilities for such work, that they have exhibited a pure and, generally, an elevated taste, and have seldom produced anything inartistic or unsatisfying. In New York mention might be made of Mrs. Wheeler and her daughter Laura Wheeler, Mrs. T. W. Dewing, Mrs. Eliza Greatorex and her daughters, Agnes Abbott, and Mrs. G. H. Smille, as the authors of conspicuously meritorious designs. In porcelain painting Miss McLoughlin, of Cincinnati, has made her name widely known, and already in the studios of decorative artists women are to be found deftly embroidering, or making lace, or putting together upholsteries and portieres. There is this, however, that I wish to say, and I trust the honesty and sincerity of the remark will excuse its seeming ungallantry, beware of prettiness in your work. I mean that mere prettiness carved or woven or painted for itself and not as the attribute of something that is above the weakly or insignificantly attractive. Our home decoration is not so grand or serious a matter as the decoration of the Sistine chapel or the Albany Capitol, but it is too important to be dealt with lightly; for the home is the vital centre, at least of American life, and all that is therein should contribute, not alone to the comfort of the dwellers, but to the spiritual and esthetic elevation and satisfaction of those who come under its influence. It is a part of our children's education to let them see good pictures, for if you elevate their tastes in one respect you are apt to elevate them in all others, and the more complete the satisfaction in these particulars, the less likely will be the child to seek lower and more vulgar enjoyments, through submission to the passions and the appetites. It will thus be seen that the esthetic has a bearing upon, if not a foundation in, the ethical nature of men, and that artists should be as earnest and as conscientious in the exercise of their abilities as should moral and mental teachers. Merely pretty things that please for the moment but exert no lasting influence, or that exert a harmful or weakening influence, are to be condemned in decoration as in other things. Daisies and daffodils are pleasing, but a surfeit of them is dreadfully cloying. It is a mistake to use floral accessories as if they were the principal features of a piece of decorative work, for largeness of design and harmony of color should be considered before those engaging leaves and petals and buds are painted. Decorators, like scenic artists in theatres, should begin by making a "scheme," and all matters of detail are easily made subordinate to that.

J. O. Davidson is one of several artists who have occupied certain of their idle moments in the painting of screens. He has one that was left in an unfinished condition by an artist who previously occupied his studio, and upon it he has dabbed and splashed the scrapings of his easel when his labors have been concluded for the day, vari-colored coats of paint nearly concealing the fact that the material of the screen is nothing but coarse sacking. The dabs of paint began to suggest forms after a time, and the artist has amused himself by developing these forms. On one panel appears a wooded glen, with a brook slipping over gray rocks, and walls of stone upreared on either side. On another a volcano is spitting fire, and a ruddy stream of lava is pouring down into a waste of rocks and crags—an idea worthy of Martin, who is said to have begun his impressive pictures by a similar process. A third panel represents an Indian snake charmer with a python writhing around her. What the screen may be when finished I can only guess, but though the subjects are diverse and not essentially decorative it makes a striking bit of studio furniture, and does not lack in pictorial interest. James M. Hart has a screen with some of his best painting on it—a cattle and landscape scene, and an Indian girl bathing in a forest pool. Speaking of painters who have begun pictures from purposeless smears upon canvas, they tell of Whistler, the eccentric Anglo-Russo-American painter, that a boy who was his model, accidentally sat on his palette one day, when it was set with its full complement of color. In a rage the artist sprang toward the unhappy youth with an evident intention of cuffing his ears, but the model, raising a dismal howl of apprehension, scampered for the door. No sooner was his back brought to view than Whistler tossed up his hands in delight and cried, "Come back, boy, come back! You've got a magnificent Turner on the seat of your trousers."

Mr. Bennett, late of the Doulton potteries at Lambeth, but more recently of New York, is the first potter to put gold decorations under the glazing of pottery. Until he discovered the secret of so applying this metal it had to be laid on over the

glaze, and the result was that while the glaze protected colors were steadfast, the gold disappeared after the decorated article had been washed or used very often. It is to be hoped that Mr. Bennett will for the good of his art and of the people who encourage it, impart this secret of his to other workers in his line. Our domestic pottery, not alone our table ware, but even our faience ornaments, lack durable gilding, and many an artistic piece of porcelain has been half spoiled by the loss of such of its design as was wrought in gold.

I suppose everybody has seen those quaint and charming Japanese pictures on tough white crape that are sold at Oriental bazaars, and are sometimes hawked about the streets. In color they are surprisingly brilliant, and the colors are often used so harmoniously that their brilliancy is highly artistic and agreeable. But gentle reader if you invest in these productions either procure several duplicates of them or be content to keep them in portfolios or cabinets. Their finest colors vanish like mist before the light. Several artists have them in their studios, Nelson Brickford amongst others. Mr. Bickford has arranged them in a large and striking group upon his studio wall, paneled off by strips of lustrous black satin, but though they have been exposed to the light only a short time their remarkable color has become lifeless, and some tints have vanished altogether. The purples, royal in their depth and beauty have become indigo; the yellows, which were of remarkable brilliancy, have totally disappeared; the greens have become a faint blue; the orange tint has left a residue of flesh color, and the fire and sparkle has gone out of all the others. The Japanese should experiment in new colors.

It is a good idea that of putting beveled plate glass in the inner entrance doors of houses. The effect is nearly as good as that of some stained glass that has been seen. Where the door is of cherry, or mahogany, or rosewood, and is carved or fashioned in the prevalent Eastlake style, the angular mouldings of the door and the angular cutting of the glass harmoniously conform, while the iridescent lights that flicker along the beveled edges of the glass have the effect of a bit of color decoration. The old style of inner hall door is a sombre affair of black walnut, with a big sheet of ground glass fastened in it, squared at the bottom, rounded at the top. On this ground glass is generally cut an impossible urn, of weak and slender form, and from its mouth gushes a profusion of impossible flowers, arranged with prim conventionality—though not conventionalized—the stems describing weakly flowing lines. These ground glass affairs are neither a complete bar to vision, for the flowers and vase are generally transparent, nor are they very pretty to look at; and those who cannot afford a La Farge or Tiffany window, to insert in their doors, might do worse than put beveled plate glass in place of them.

And, talking of glass, is it not about time to "call in" the imitation stained glass that for a year or two past has been regarded with favor as a substitute for the real thing. Those merchants, and especially those liquor saloon keepers, who made a display of it in their windows were regarded as people of considerable enterprise and taste, until it was discovered that the glass was merely a chromo lithograph design on oil paper, and could be had for a few cents a yard. At first it makes rather a brilliant appearance when gaslight is shot through it, but when it cracks and peels it looks decidedly shabby, while daylight reveals it as a transparent fraud.

Is it true that Japanese art is undergoing a radical change? The label appended to one of the articles of "bigotry and virtue" in the north gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art bears the surprising assertion that "there is no longer any art in Japan"; yet in the very same case that contains this label may be seen vases, cabinets, sword hilts, carvings, lacquers, and other things that, though of recent date, are eminently artistic, at least from the Japanese standpoint of taste and criticism. Japanese art is *sui generis*, though, to be sure, a re-

lation exists between it and the coarser art of China—and the opinion may be safely hazarded that, despite the rapid advance of the Japanese in culture, and their wonderful faculty for assimilating the best features of younger civilizations, the native art of the country will not be deeply affected, either for better or for worse. Their art is essentially decorative, not pictorial, and as it possesses abundant and recognized charms of its own I believe that the outside world will continue to demand it, and to pay a premium on the real over the imitation. For this reason, a purely commercial one, the native painters, potters, carvers and embroiders will probably continue to follow the customs and traditions that pertain to their art and that have preserved its odd character through many centuries. We do not want mongrel art; we do not want to frame pictures that have no perspective; we do not want Japanese designs to include citizens with plug hats; but we do want the Japanese color, the free technique, the brilliant boats, banners and costume, the gaunt storks, the pretty flights of birds, the luxuriant flowers, the rich lacquers and enamels, the polished cabinets, the dainty ivories, the globes of crystal, the unique bottles, plates and vases, and the grotesque images. When the Mikado's people realize these facts and appreciate the forcible sequence that we pay them for their own ideas, and not for imitation of ours, it is improbable that the art of Japan will alter beyond recognition within the experience of this generation at least. At present we appear to be striving more earnestly to learn from them than they to learn of us.

An artist who knows where or how his picture is to be hung will commonly make some effort to make it suitable to its environment; that is, if it is to hang in a strong light he will modify the strength of his high tints, but if it is to hang in a shadowy corner he will paint it in a high key. Now this is a bit of workmanship that decorators might imitate oftener than they do. How often do we find bed rooms, where the wall should have at least a tint, glaring in all the whiteness of new plaster, while the dim basement rooms, where so many civilized people insist upon sitting, and the unlighted halls and corridors are wainscoted in dark woods, finished with a deep tint of lifeless green or brown and almost conventual in their gloom. Why not reverse the treatment and let a little restful shade into the sleeping room and an effect of light into the halls and underground apartments? Whistler, I believe, decorated one of his dark halls in lemon yellow with a dado of old gold, and on the plain yellow surface he painted brilliant butterflies. In a better lighted room he adopted a different scheme of color, using various shades of greens and blues, and painting over the ceiling a magnificent mass of peacock feathers. A light rose color is recommended for dimly lighted rooms and halls, as exhibiting a certain intrinsic quality of light. It should also be remembered that light rooms appear larger, and dark rooms smaller than they are, a room merely whitewashed or kalsomined appearing to shrink several inches when the walls are covered with dark paper or tapestries, or when much of the wall surface is concealed by cabinets in dark wood.

SCREENS made of leather are very beautiful for dining rooms and libraries. A pine frame-work is covered with embossed or illuminated leather and decorated with a leather fringe, studded with brass nails. Handsome dining-room and hall screens are also made of the new materials employed as wall coverings, and every variety of embossed and raised paper is used, either alone or in combination with smaller panels or pictures laid on. Deep-toned leathers are often painted by hand, the color of the material forming the background. There is absolutely no rule for the size or shape of screens; they may be high or low, narrow or broad, one fold or six; it does not appear to matter. For fire-screens only there is a regulation. They are invariably single, and are now generally of transparent, or at least semi-opaque, material. In their construction, opalescent, stained and painted glass plays important parts, and most exquisite fire-screens are imported from France, which are made of very fine brass wire closely interwoven and mounted on frames of hammered metal.



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